

SMILE Program

The judges of the Second Judicial Circuit, Lincoln and Minnehaha Counties, have adopted a general requirement that parents in divorce, custody, and visitation (parenting time) cases attend a short class on the effects of divorce or parental conflict on children. In this Circuit the judges have chosen to use the SMILE Program, which stands for "Start Making It Livable for Everyone." SMILE was originally developed by a group of Michigan courts and "Friend of the Court" programs (called Court Appointed Special Advocates, or CASA, here in South Dakota). SMILE is now used by many states and jurisdictions across the United States, and was last updated in 2006.

The SMILE program is offered at the Minnehaha County Courthouse in Sioux Falls at 7:00 p.m. on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month. The sessions are facilitated by staff from Volunteers of America. The program usually takes less than two hours and involves a video, an information booklet, and a short group discussion. A fee of \$5 is charged at the door to cover the expense of the video, the booklet, and the facilitator's time. Please call Court Administration at 605-367-5920 to schedule your SMILE session.

Parents are strongly encouraged to complete the program in person at one of the Tuesday evening sessions. If you cannot attend the sessions in Sioux Falls because of work reasons or you live far away, you can ask the judge to allow you to attend a SMILE program at one of the many other courts using the program around the United States. An internet search on the phrase "SMILE divorce" will list many other locations. The program is certainly most effective in person, but if you absolutely cannot complete the SMILE program in person for some exceptional reason, you can ask a judge to allow you to complete the program online, here. At the links below you will find (1) the video, (2) the booklet, and a verification form that must be signed by you and one other person to verify that you watched the entire video and reviewed all the pages of the booklet.

[SMILE Video](#)

[SMILE Brochure](#)

[Online Verification Form](#)

Our special thanks to the Friend of the Court Program in Oakland County, Michigan, for allowing us to use this program and to post the video and booklet on the web.